

# Caregiver Assistance News

"CARING FOR YOU...CARING FOR OTHERS"

## Fire Safety and Storm Emergencies

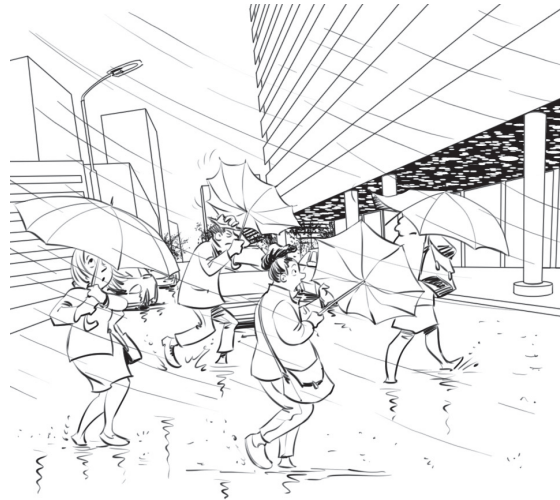
Every area has its potential hazards and all households need a plan to ensure that everyone stays safe if disaster strikes. The specifics will vary by where you live and which hazards you're most likely to face but the basics are the same everywhere. As people age, their needs and their capabilities change, so in preparing for a disaster, it's important to think differently than you might have at earlier ages.

### Four Essential Steps

**1. Know Your Hazards** – Visit your local health department's website to see what the potential hazards are in your community.

**2. Create a Physical Safety Plan** - In case you need to evacuate, have a plan in place for where you and your family members will meet and make sure that everyone in the household knows exactly where this place is located. Always keep at least a half tank of gas in your car and follow any evacuation routes that have been established.

Other emergencies may require you to "shelter-in-place," which means to take immediate shelter wherever you are—at home, work, or in between. The safest place to do that may depend on the type of disaster; in a tornado, for example, the best spot is the lowest place possible away from windows. Visit the [www.ready.gov/shelter](http://www.ready.gov/shelter) for specific tips in different locations.



**3. A Family Communications Plan** - Your family may not be together when disaster strikes, so plan how you will contact one another. During a disaster, it may be easier to make long-distance calls than it is to make local ones. You and your family members should each know the designated non-local contact for your family and have that phone number programmed into your phones as *ICE (In Case of Emergency)*. Consider signing up for text messages or emails to let you know about emergencies in your community through your local Office of Emergency Management (FEMA).

**4. The Emergency Kit** - Every household should have a disaster supply kit that has the basic items you may need during an emergency.

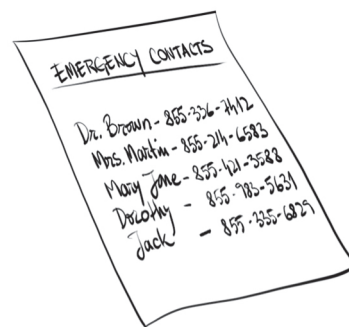
Source: [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov); [Berkeleywellnessalerts.com](http://Berkeleywellnessalerts.com); CDC; FEMA

Article continues  
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## Emergency Supplies Kit

Assemble a disaster recovery kit and make sure everyone in the home knows where it is. Put your kit in two easy to carry bags. Include in your kit:

- ☛ List of prescription **medications**, dosage, and allergies. Also include at least a one week supply of medications.
- ☛ Extra **eyeglasses** and hearing-aid batteries, **wheelchair batteries** or other special equipment.
- ☛ A list of the style and **serial numbers of medical devices** such as pacemakers.
- ☛ Copies of medical **insurance and Medicare cards**.
- ☛ **List of doctors and emergency contacts**.
- ☛ Flashlight, battery-operated radio, cell phone recharger, fresh batteries, extra blankets, a manual can opener, eating utensils and a whistle.
- ☛ **Extra clothing and incontinence supplies**.
- ☛ **Water**—One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation. If you live in a warm weather climate more water may be necessary.
- ☛ Store water tightly in clean plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. **Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person.**
- ☛ **Food**—Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water such as **ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables** and foods for **special diets**.



To purchase a Red Cross emergency preparedness kit, visit the Red Cross online store. Find a full list of supplies on the CDC website.

## Fire—The Deadliest Threat

No disaster is more frequent or deadly for a person with a mobility disability than fire. Contact the local fire department for help in evacuation planning, but make sure the advice fits the needs of the person in your care. Besides the usual advice about home fire safety, such as buying and maintaining smoke alarms and fire extinguishers, help the person in your care follow these tips:

1. Buy clothing, linens, and blankets made of fire-resistant material.
2. Arrange furniture so it does not obstruct a quick exit.
3. Attach a small *ready-to-go* bag to wheelchair or walker.
4. Contact support network members to help if he or she must evacuate a building by stairway.
5. Memorize a few phrases to quickly explain the situation to first responders.

Sources: National Organization on Disability at [www.nod.org](http://www.nod.org); Ready.gov is from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; FEMA; American Red Cross

## Taking Care of Yourself—Keep Something for Yourself

A common side effect of caregiving is “loss of self” by focusing so much on the care recipient for so long that you forget you have your own needs and interests too. To help you remember to nurture your own soul, maintain a “hopes” list:

- If you had an extra hour of time, how would you fill it?
- If you could take a long weekend break, what would you do? If you could take a week-long vacation, where would you go?
- If you could re-start your career, what profession would you pursue?

Commit to spending time on an activity that you enjoy each day.



## Be Wary of Scams

If an insurance agent calls or visits your home—and they haven’t set up an appointment or been invited—to sell or endorse any Medicare product, he or she is acting illegally.

## Live Life Laughing!

Don’t worry the doctor has performed thousands of these operations and has not cut himself once.



## Inspiration

*Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Don’t Fall – Be Safe

Rushing is a major cause of falls. To help avoid taking a misstep, paint wooden or concrete steps with a strip of contrasting color on the **edge of each step** or on the top and bottom steps. Even in an emergency, don’t rush going up or down stairs.

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## SAFETY TIPS—Extra Care for People with Disabilities

Elders and people with disabilities must take *additional* precautions. Practice the emergency plan regularly.

- ★ **Personal Care Assistance:** If the senior receives assistance from a home healthcare agency, find out how they respond to an emergency. Designate emergency backup providers.
- ★ **Blind or visually impaired:** Keep an extra cane by the bed and attach a whistle to it. Remind the person to be cautious when moving, as paths may have become obstructed.
- ★ **Hearing Impaired:** Keep extra batteries for hearing aids with emergency supplies. Store hearing aids in a container attached to the nightstand so they can be located quickly.
- ★ **Wheelchairs:** If the person is in a wheelchair or has mobility problems, plan for how he or she will evacuate and discuss it with your care providers.

NEXT ISSUE... DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE

# Caregiver Assistance News

“ C A R I N G   F O R   Y O U ... C A R I N G   F O R   O T H E R S ”

## Q U I C K   Q U I Z

One of the most important aspects of emergency planning is keeping your family or the person in your care physically safe, which includes knowing where to go and where to meet in different disaster scenarios. Also think about how you will communicate in different emergency situations. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. As people age, their needs and capabilities change, so in preparing for a disaster, it's important to think differently than you might have at earlier ages.  
T F
2. The safest place to take shelter in a disaster depends on the type of disaster.  
T F
3. During a disaster, it may be easier to make long-distance calls than it is to make local ones.  
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4. In the emergency kit, a two day's supply of medications is sufficient.  
T F
5. One gallon of water per person per day, for drinking and sanitation is required. If you live in a warm weather climate more water may be necessary.  
T F
6. No disaster is more frequent or deadly for a person with a mobility disability than fire.  
T F
7. It is not important to maintain a smoke alarm.  
T F
8. Since rushing is a major cause of falls, even in an emergency, a person should not rush going up or down stairs.  
T F
9. Your local fire department does not help in evacuation planning.  
T F
10. You can sign up for text messages or emails to let you know about emergencies in your community through your local Office of Emergency Management (FEMA).  
T F

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_